4: Tantaquidgeon E-5 (1930) 1942
NM7 Delaware NM7

DELAWARE MEDICAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Theories on the Causes of Disease.

THE DELAWARE, like so many preliterate peoples, share concepts of a similar character concerning the causes of disease (Clements, 1932). Certain maladies are attributed to the presence of some evil spirit in the body, which in turn is believed to be the work of a sorcerer; others are thought due to the patients' iniquities while a few result from an encounter with an apparition. Failure to obey the laws of nature is the reason most frequently cited by Wi·tapanóxwe for the increase of disease among the Delaware. He said, in part, "In ancient times there was but little sickness among the Indians. The Delaware were greatly blessed because we always kept up our ceremonies and observed the rules of right living.[1] The Indian was healthy because he ate only clean, pure food and lived close to nature. Then came the new people with their strange ways and food, and dreadful diseases."

Paraphrasing the statements of the informant, it is implied that with the onset and steady progress of Europeanization, the Indian was obliged to relinquish many of the ways of his accustomed mode of life. He was forced to seek new territories in order to escape the alien influences that were being forced upon him. Like the wild game, the Delaware fled to more remote regions because their former environment had become so thoroughly contaminated. At this time, it is said, the dwarfs and other non-human folk had safety and seclusion in the rocky cliffs. Certain plants no longer reproduced and grew. Those Indians who clung tenaciously to the teachings of their elders were greatly blessed by the Creator who guided them in visions as of old. From the conservative viewpoint of Wi·tapanóxwe, individuals of a weaker "intellect," were unable to cope with such adverse conditions and were swept away by the devastating effects of acculturation.

[1] Reference may be made to a recent paper of A. I. Hallowell (1939) in which he has shown that "sin" is considered a potent causation of disease among the Saulteaux Indians of the Lake Winnipeg region—Editor.

753 The following examples are typical of the ideas which the present-day Oklahoma Delaware express in their rationalization of the causes of various maladies and physical deformities. Rheumatism, which the Delaware call by a term meaning "old people's disease," is attributed to unclean habits of living during youth. Scrofula is described by the Delaware phrase meaning "matter around the neck." If a person indulges in profanity, he may develop this condition.

It is said that congenital malformation rarely occurs among the Indians. Such physical abnormalities are attributed to the power of malevolent spirits which afflicted the child because of his parents' failure to fulfill tribal obligations by keeping up certain ceremonies bequeathed to them. Such a physical handicap, however, did not keep an individual [826] from leading a useful life, for he was otherwise blessed. The informant added, "Sometimes the weakest person is chosen by the Creator to be powerful in mind. He does that as a matter of pity."[2]

753 776 Paralysis is said to be the result of an encounter with an apparition.[3] If a person sees a ghost-like form approaching, he should step aside to avoid being stricken with paralysis. According to Wi·tapanóxwe, "an apparition in passing by is felt as a slight wind. Sometimes what appears to be a cloud is seen floating along the road and if allowed to touch a person, will cause a stroke." Occasionally a fire is observed to start at the bottom of a tree, blaze up to the top, and then disappear. The informant warned against attempting to strike at such a flame inasmuch as it would result in fatal sickness to the person or to a member of his family.

Wi·tapanóxwe relates the following incident of a personal encounter with an apparition. "We were just young boys then, my brother and I, and we were riding home one afternoon just before sundown. As we rode along I noticed something in the middle of the road, and it seemed to be coming toward us. It had the appearance of a large animal but I could not see its form distinctly. Naturally, I was a little bewild-

[773]

[2] Delaware mythology reiterates the theme of the weakling child vanquishing his powerful opponents through the weapon of shrewd wits over brute strength

[3] Zeisberger (no date, p. 131) says in regard to apparitions: "Wandering spirits and ghosts they claim sometimes throw something into a public path and whoever goes over it is bewitched and becomes lame or ill. They even pretend to know where such a thing happened, learning it from the doctors who are thought to be able to effect a cure."

ered but I did not tell my brother what I saw. It seemed to come nearer and nearer to us but as we drew close, the thing disappeared suddenly into the woods. I asked my brother if he had seen the strange object but he replied that he had not. When we reached home I told my mother what I had seen and she warned us never to follow a ghost like that as it would lead us astray and finally to a pile of bones."

It may be of interest to note here that at times several people might see the same ghost and "feel" it pass by. Such an experience is always regarded as a warning, foretelling illness, death, or some sudden event. Children are cautioned against answering the call of an unseen person as it might prove to be a "ghost-whoop." Should a child answer such a call, his jaw would become dislocated or even his entire body paralyzed. Once a hunter answered such a "ghost-whoop" and upon trying to locate it, ran into a stack of bones.*

The cause of insanity is attributed to the failure of a family to perform certain inherited ceremonials. Failure to continue such prescribed rites is punished by misfortune of some kind. Certain individuals are capable of exorcising people afflicted with this malady, the Indian name for which is translated as "lacking good sense." In one incident a young man believed that he saw a "mask" everywhere he went. His relatives finally resorted to a sweat doctor who entered the sweat lodge to ascertain the cause of the illness. After the ritual the doctor announced that it was due to their failure to perform regularly a ceremony which had come down in the family. In order to avert further trouble and to rid the young man of the disease, the doctor advised that the neglected feast and ceremony be performed, after which the patient became normal once more. Could anything be more in conformity with modern psycopathic practice than the preceding case! Other native terms which apply to people similarly affected are translated as "silly" or "half-witted."

I might also note that having in mind the prevalence of the theory that animals are the main causes of disease among the Cherokee (Mooney, 1892, p. 322), and Muskhogean peoples of the Southeast, I failed to find any evidence whatever in the mind of my informant of a similar belief among the Delaware.

* Archaeologists, take note!—Editor.

nature of the disease. The flesh of animals and fowl is excluded from the diet and in the case of fever, red or fox squirrel flesh is not eaten. This food taboo is known to the Delaware by a native word meaning "makes you sick." Corn hominy, however, is administered in most cases, as it is considered to be a nourishing food.

In the case of childbirth, salt is not eaten for ten days. Onions are given the mother to produce milk, but care must be taken not to use a quantity such as to cause nausea for the child and mother.

During the catamenial period a woman is not allowed to prepared food nor taken an active part in domestic affairs.[33] The separate dishes assigned to her at that time, may only be used by her husband. Food cooked by such a woman would produce tuberculosis in others in a short time. A term translated as "gives dirty food," is applied to such a practice and refers to the resultant poisonous effects. During her periodic isolation a woman herbalist must refrain from preparing remedies or participating in any of the ceremonies.

Divinatory Curing Practices

Certain acts of a divinatory nature are performed upon selection and preparation of plants, roots, and bark employed in making medicine. Only plants that are clean and well developed, with the roots free from knotty growths, are taken. When seeking bark, the medicine gatherer selects a sturdy, well-formed tree for the purpose. The bark growing on the east side of a tree is preferred for its greater strength-giving properties received from the morning sun.

In gathering medicinal supplies, the materials are inspected for a clue as to the course of the treatment. Thus, if roots appear rough and knotty, the patient will be difficult to cure; if clean and well-formed, it will be an easy task to restore his health. Another practice is to place some crushed leaves or roots in running water. If the substance sinks to the bottom of the stream, the patient for whom it is prepared, will die; if it floats, a speedy recovery is assured.

When all other remedies have failed, an emergency medicine is sometimes made from scrapings of deer antler. During its preparation a prayer is offered to the animal from which the antler was obtained. Wi·tapanóxwe related an incident in which a trial was made by means

[33] The puberty ceremony for young girls and the periodic isolation of women is described by Zeisberger, *ibid*, pp. 75-77.

4: Tantaquidgeon E-5 (1930) 1942
NM7 Delaware NM7

Loud reports from river ice indicate an early thaw.

A wolf "whinnying" (howling) denotes a change in the weather.

To see a cat washing its face is an indication of an unexpected visitor; sharpening its claws denotes that it will soon receive some meat.

DELAWARE FOOD RESOURCES

IN AN EARLIER section it was pointed out that according to native belief, human health is dependent upon "pure, natural" food. Products of the fields and forests thus acquired a sacred character (Speck, 1931, p. 50), and food and medicine in Delaware conception were not totally unlike. It follows from this that the ailments afflicted the Indians in modern times are considered as being due to a departure from the ancient food regimen provided by the Creator. Investigation of the food supply, and its methods of preparation, was thought worthy of being taken up as part of the present phase of inquiry. The results are embodied in the present section, partly through their bearing upon health as dependent upon food. Except for this interrelation, the subject matter might seem to be more definitely an economic one.

Maize

Among the food products used by the Delaware, Indian maize *(Zea mays)* stands out as the staple vegetable product. Maize is believed to provide nourishment for the soul as well as for the body. The reverence for the Spirit of Maize[1] and for the processes of its preparation, still survives among the Delaware.

Before presenting the data which deals with the preparation of corn foods, it seems appropriate to mention native beliefs concerning the origin of this sacred food.[2] Maize, "original corn" or "common corn," is a gift from the Creator and in former times, according to Harrington *(op. cit.,* pp. 43, 141), was considered as one of the powerful

[1] Harrington, 1921, pp. 43, 193.

[2] For further information dealing with the maize complex in eastern North America, particularly among the Iroquois, see Parker, 1910; Converse, 1910; Waugh, 1916. The writer (1930) has noted the survival of certain traits indicating the presence of a religious rite in the early period among the southern New England tribes. For the Southeastern peoples, consult Swanton, 1928 b, pp. 443-444.

Death

761 Early burials which have been excavated reveal few objects buried with the body although Penn indicates that it was customary among the Lenape to place objects in the graves (p. 37). Skinner is of the opinion that this may have been a custom which was coming into more common practice during the period we are dealing with (Skinner, 1909, p. 50). Of about equal occurrence are flexed and secondary bone burials. A Delaware burial has been described by Lindstrom: "...a round pit is dug in the ground and a stool is placed in the hole upon which the dead man shall sit. Then the dead man's money is placed upon him and he is set down in the pit upon the stool with a tobacco pipe a fathom long in his mouth...". After the hole is filled up, "...they dig down in the corners of a square four very long poles upon which they make three shelves, and decorate the poles with long stripe of blue, red or green frieze[16] hanging like fringes." The bones were later dug up and the flesh cut from them after which they were wrapped in chestnut bark and placed on the bottom shelf where the bundle was allowed to stand until it rotted. (Lindstrom, pp. 249-250).

765 Above the body there has frequently been found a layer of shells which has been interpreted as evidence of a feast of the dead (Skinner, 1909, p. 50). Other features of the death ceremonies noted by early writers are: the use of charcoal on the face as a sign of mourning (Penn, p. 37; Danckaerts, p. 159), the sending of a messenger to all friends to announce a person's decease and loud lamentations at the grave. The name of the deceased was not mentioned (Lindstrom, pp. 249-250) 784 551 Many of these features are incorporated in Heckewelder's excellent description of the funeral of a chief's wife (Heckewelder, 1881, pp. 269-276).

Disease

753 Disease was classified into natural illness and sickness caused by witchcraft and spirits of the dead. This classification is reflected in the many different types of cures which the Delaware practiced. Curing was one of the few activities placed in the hands of professional 755 people, the shamans, although purely medicinal cures were also performed by laymen. The shamans used a combination of medicines, magic, sweating, bleeding and psychotherapy to effect their cures for which they were paid. Penn says that the Delaware will give anything to be cured and this is echoed by later writers (Penn, p. 36; Heckewelder, 1881, p. 232).

757 Medicines which were taken internally were made from bark and roots mixed with water (Penn, p. 36; Heckewelder, 1881, p. 224-231); likewise, plants with medicinal properties were made into poultices for wounds, boils and snake bite (Heckewelder, 1881, p. 229; Loskiel, p. 113). The shaman might also breathe on the patient or blow his remedy over the patient's body. In addition to making and giving these remedies, the shaman frequently put on a performance in which he grimaced and acted in such a way as to frighten away the evil spirit which

7: Speck E-5 (1928-1932) 1937 NM7 Delaware NM7
Lenape

524 used to denote a game of extremely wide distribution throughout northern North America and retaining a uniform type wherever found, is common among the Delawares. At the present time it is played for amusement by persons of both sexes and all ages during the evenings in winter time. This, too, is regarded as a pastime for those who are born in winter, one that is thought to bring on cold stormy weather the ensuing day. Herein lies its ceremonial character.

To a sharpened stick or bone is fastened a leather string some twenty inches long at the other end of which is fixed the tail of a rabbit. On the string are threaded five hollow cones, the wider ends open toward the stick. For the want of sufficient native material the Delawares make these cones by hollowing out and tapering common spools. In former times they were the phalanges of the deer. In the specimens figured one is constructed with spools, the other with sections of some animals' leg bones. The object of the play is to swing the cones in the air, catching as many as possible on the end of the pointed stick. Each player repeats the attempt to impale these cones until he misses three times. For each cone caught on the stick he receives a count of one. The players keep count of their totals by memory. The winning total is decided upon at the beginning of the game, it may be 15, 25, 50 or 100 points. Small wagers are laid upon the outcome, the player to reach the total first taking the stakes. To catch the rabbit's tail counts nothing.

[525] [171] I hardly need comment upon the wide distribution of this game from the Pacific to the Atlantic and as far south as the Plains unbrokenly across North America, even in archaeological levels of considerable historical depth as Dr. Strong's findings indicate (Strong, op. cit., p. 192).

CEREMONIAL DOLLS

778 *Oxta's*, "Doll or Plaything."—The privilege of making dolls as toys out of cornhusks is denied children. The reason is that corn is too sacred to be trifled with. To violate this would bring on bad luck in the form of sickness. Only those in whose family inheritance the obligation to make and to perform in ceremony with such creations are permitted to

[777] [753]

8:Lindeström T-5 (1654-1655) 1925
NM7 Delaware NM7

CHAPTER XXV.

Concerning the Devil-Chasing of the American Savage People and the Doctors of Medicine Who Are Called Devil-Chasers.

When the savage sickens and death attacks him 753
he does not believe in any death and resurrection, 755
but that *Manitto*, that is the Devil, is plaguing him;[1] for he knows indeed that the evil one exists,[2] who sends him all evil things; but he will not believe that any good God exists, who gives him both temporal and eternal good. Therefore the savages sacrifice and prepare feasts for the Devil in order to propitiate him that he should do them no harm; this the savages do in their hunting expeditions about which we have related before, and all other things which take place according to their plans.[3]

Now when the savage is tormented on his death- 755
bed, he calls for the doctor of medicine, who is otherwise called the devil-chaser. Then he first makes use of all kinds of medicines and when he finds that they do not help, he pretends to be worse than the Devil himself, intending thus to chase the evil one out of body of the savage, wherefore he is called the devil-chaser. Runs back and forth,

[1] The construction is loose. The idea is: The Indian does not believe that God calls him to his death for a later resurrection, but that a fetish or some unseen power, probably in the service of an enemy, is plaguing him and will eventually cause his death.

[2] *Ty det weet han weill, att tala om den ondha wara till*, for he indeed knows to till [that] the evil one exists.

[3] See above, Chapts. XV, XVII.

9: Kinietz E-4, 5 (1938) 1946
NM7 Delaware NM7

774 beep left undone, when the ghost ceases the visits.
775 CAPTAIN CHIPPS—Ghosts are not known—have not been heard of.

J. W.—Ghosts are really shades or shadows of spirits, often seen before or after death, they are signs or warnings and can be seen by human eyes. There is much paralysis among the Delaware which is often caused by being struck with a shadow or crossing it or paying any attention to it if one sees it coming. Stopping [822] to look at it, turning around after passing, even innocently, has 763 evil effects. There is no cure for it. Preventive by rubbing [751] streak of ashes on left cheek under eye before going out in the evening. Often marked children as safeguard.

W. T. attributed to the soul the actions of the shadow reported by J. W.

40. Witches and wizards

754 JOHN JOHNSTON—They are very firm in the belief of witchcraft and suppose that there is many among them that can appear [753] in the shape of any animal they please and have power to cause sickness. They believe this to be a supernatural power invested in them by some one of the Deities for the purpose of good that they might have power to heal the sick etc. But that in their present degenerated state they have made a bad use of it, that instead of healing they inflict with sickness and other calamities.
754 CAPTAIN PIPE—They believe in witches and wizards and 756 attribute their powers to the use of certain medicine, said to have been procured of the Nanticokes who had it from a naked infant found by them on the Sea Shore. In 1810, the prophet when [792] preaching against the use of this medicine pointed out five or six men and women on white river as the possessors of it. These [683] persons protested their innocence and were put to the torture, where they were exhorted to save themselves by delivering the means of destruction which they possessd. Seeing no other prospect of escape from death, they professed a knowledge of the arts and promised compliance, but after release they were not able to produce the cause of the difficulty, and they were by common consent condemned to death by burning.

10: Speck E-4, 5 (ca. 1925) 1931
NM7 Delaware NM7

the spiritual force represented by it is apparent. The being itself seems to be incorporated in the mask image. The latter become more truly a fetish than the carved images representing the deities in the Big House. Its presence is a source of active power, for the most part, directed toward maleficence. This I think is brought out in several records which the informant dictated to me, tracing the presence of disease and misfortune to the possession of masks representing the human face, both large and small, in families who had, through some event, come into possession of them. Possession seems not always to have been voluntary and in such cases the owners were obliged through the revelations given them in dreams to perform periodic rites, called feasts, to annul their malefic potencies. I am led to believe that this explanation is a valid phenomenon associated with mask likenesses; one omitted from the explanations given us by the authors cited.

We learn in this connection that once a year, generally in the summer, the mask image was given a dance and feast of hominy by the family in whose custody it remained. The express purpose of this rite was to provide it enjoyment and nourishment as a means of conciliation beyond what was accorded it by being brought out during the performance in the Big House. In such a family the mask must be disposed of in a ceremonial manner should it be desired to discontinue the obligatory rites, or should the family die out. Tradition requires the mask in this case to be buried, as the informant states, lest the effects of neglect of the mask be handed down to relatives. One is reminded, in learning of this reverential attitude toward the masks, of the frequency with which carved stone faces have been exhumed in the territories previously inhabited by the Delawares. The Museums of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York possess a number of specimens of the faces, which have been briefly discussed and illustrated by Harrington.[1]

The family in which fell the custody of the False Face was the Pala'ciman "Frenchman," family of the Wolf group. The wife of Frenchman was the person who had hereditary ownership of the mask. Her descendants, the McCartlain family (Turkey group), were next in succession but being inclined toward Christianity the rite was neglected by them. Subsequently Julius Fouts, Pet ane'hing, "Threw Him Here," of the Tortoise group, took charge of the mask. Being afraid that it might be destroyed by worms while in his possession which might have brought sickness to his family as a consequence, Fouts turned it over to Pe'matae'kamən, "Moving-Flowers Man" (George Bullette) of the Fowl group. By the latter it was sold out of the tribe and finally found its errancy terminated in an exhibition case of the Museum of the American Indian (Heye Foundation). (Fig. 10).

[1] Op. cit., I, pp. 32-43.

10: Speck E-4, 5 (ca. 1925) 1931
NM7 Delaware NM7

The Delawares determine, by the position of the stars, when to gather herbs for medicine, for they believe that the position of the stars and the moon informs them when the medical properties of the herb may be found in the branches or in the roots. The time to plant crops in the spring was likewise determined by the phases of the moon and the position of the stars. At a certain time when the moon and stars are in the correct relation to each other the Delawares know that the wild animals breed and that fish go up-stream. Persons born under certain changes of the moon are said to be affected by certain periodic diseases such as epilepsy and fits. The gathering of material for the making of baskets depends upon the time of year. In order that hides be made into durable leather the animals must be killed at the right time of year. The same is true in regard to killing hogs, for unless the animals are killed in the right quarter of the moon the meat will not keep. Likewise fruit, according to the Delaware must be picked at a certain phase of the moon or else it will rot. Celestial phenomena, the manitu of the skies, rule numerous phases of Delaware life.

THE CONCEPT OF PURITY AND DEFILEMENT.—It is most interesting to note a distinct attitude of reverence toward the phenomena of nature which are uncontaminated by the mechanistic hand of man. Nature itself is denoted by a term which may be recognized universally as an accepted definition: te'kaneo'a·u, "wild life, creation" in the liberal sense. This refers to creatures and phenomena brought into existence and controlled by the power of the Great Spirit. From nature's category the products of human invention are excluded. Thus it is the realm of pure nature with which the Delaware fundamentalist finds himself in accord. It supplies his needs, it satisfies his emotions, engages spiritual concern, becoming literally the element in which his whole life is framed. To deviate from the processes of nature, in thought and act, is sacrilege to him, to limit himself to its sphere is a sacred obligation passed down to him from his forefathers barring him off from the hazards of change and alteration in his conduct of life, and particularly in the performance of his religious duties. The Delaware fundamentalist is truly a conservative. By the mandates of his own creed he ought to be indeed a reactionary. And similar sentiment seems forthcoming from other Algonkian doctrinaries, hence we may assume it to be an ancient property of the race. Its lament is the necessity to depart from the ancient nature-bound practices, through the measure of force exerted by changes which age and time bring about.[1]

[1] This characteristic is often likened by them to the precepts of Christ, to whose example they refer with sympathy, and with the conviction that they are by nature his followers.

15:Morgan E-5 (1859)1959
NM7 Delaware NM7

[p 52(A)]

535 *Dances of the Delawares*

1. Old Religious Dance	10. Dog Dance
2. Wolf Dance	11. War Dance
3. Turtle Dance	12. Feasting Dance
4. Chicken Dance	13. Dance for the Dead
5. Buffalo Dance	14. Striking the Stick Dance
6. Bear Dance	15. Buzzard Dance
7. Doll Baby Dance	16. Turkey Dance
8. Horse Dance	17. Duck Dance
9. False Face Dance	18. [left blank]
	19. Shuffle Dance

773 829 *Origin of the Three Varieties of the Human Race*

Mr. Pratt mentioned to me a Delaware explanation of the creation of the Negro, Indian and White man, to the effect that the Negro was created first, and was, as we say, a mistake or failure; it was the first attempt at man's creation. The Great Spirit next created the Indian, who was admitted to be a great improvement upon the negro; and last of all he created the white man.

The Good Spirit and the Boil

776 753 Mr. Pratt had a boil come on his arm. A Delaware told him he had a good friend, and in explanation said to him that the Evil Spirit had intended to destroy him; that he was followed in his rounds to do mischief to men by a small but good spirit, who continued in various ways to defeat the evil spirit of his purpose, when it was a case in which he wished to save the person from harm. That as the evil spirit was about to put forth his power upon him, the little spirit stepped forward and said to the evil one, "you let me deal with this person," whereupon he took or drew on his invisible bow a small and invisible arrow, and shot

[p52(B)]

776 Mr. Pratt on the arm, and hence the boil.
753 In the meantime, the evil spirit, seeing the little spirit about to deal with him, passed on, and was thus diverted from his purpose. After doing this friendly act the little spirit at once passed on upon the track of the evil one to arrest and avert as many of his evil deeds as he could by persuasion, cunning or artifice. Thus the Indian said Mr. Pratt had a friend, and this boil was the result of his friendly interposition to save him from a greater evil.

[*Delaware Clans*]

115 Conversation with [Morgan's blank], the mother of Charles Johnny Cake.[83] She is sub. 1 Wolf Tribe. Her husband was Turtle. Her children are Wolf.

614 She confirms the division into Wolf, Turtle and Turkey Tribes, and says these are subdivided. The Wolf has the Bear, the Turtle the Big and Little Turtle, and the Turkey has the Crow. Those belonging to
[582] each subdivision to this day refuse to intermarry; but Little Turtle intermarries with Big Turtle, Bear with Wolf, Crow with Turkey. The children of ancient times and
[611] now are of the tribe of the mother in all cases. The terms Wolf, Turtle and Turkey are general ones, the word Took-seat, the name of the Wolf Tribe means "a round foot." There is another name for Wolf, Tam-me. The word for Turtle, Poke-koo-rin-go, does not mean any particular kind of Turtle, and so the name of the Turkey, Pal-la-ooh, means any kind of fowl. It appears to be a generalization for haired, non-haired and feathered animals. The subdivisions I must learn from her son.

She mentioned the We-loon-see Tribe as that of the Little Turtle, and also the Crow and the Bear, but could not remember their names. She gave We-saw-hut-ko, meaning